



PAT STRACHOTA

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Testimony by Representative Pat Strachota
In Support of AB 153

Thank you Chairperson Erpenbach and committee members for bringing this bill before you today.

Last session the legislature passed Act 318 which created uniform continuing education standards for dental hygienists.

Today, I ask you to consider AB 153 which provides similar professional education standards for dentists. The bill mandates a 30 hour continuing education requirement for dentists over their two year licensure period with 25 of those hours to be clinical. Assembly Amendment 1 provides that a maximum of 4 of the 30 hours be from teaching and removes the provision regarding preparation as an allowable activity.

Representative Molepske and I have worked in a bi-partisan manner with the Wisconsin Dental Association to craft this bill. The Dental Association will be testifying on behalf of AB 153 later in the hearing and can answer any technical questions the committee may have.

Many dentists already pursue continuing education on their own because the materials and technology of dentistry has changed greatly over the years. However, health care consumers deserve to know that their dentist is up to date on not only new technology but important regulatory changes.

Wisconsin and Colorado are the only two states in the nation that currently do not have any uniform standards of professional continuing education for dentists.

AB 153 passed the Assembly unanimously in April and I urge the committee to support AB 153.



WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVE
Louis J. Molepske, Jr.
71ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Written Testimony of Louis J. Molepske, Jr.
Assembly Bill 153
Continuing Education for Dentists

Good morning Chairperson Erpenbach and Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services. Representative Molepske had hoped to be here to offer his testimony in person, but unfortunately he had a prior commitment, and as such, he has asked me to address you on his behalf.

Regardless of an individual's chosen profession, their education does not simply end when they complete their formal schooling. Instead, employees of all professions continue to learn new skills as they accumulate experience. For a number of professions, particularly those that are self-regulating, the best means of imparting new schools of thought and tools of the trade is by offering continuing education courses. It is for this reason that the Department of Regulation and Licensing currently monitors thirty-one professions in the State of Wisconsin that require their members to take mandatory continuing education courses of some sort. In addition, a number of employers have their own continuing education requirements that are not regulated by the state. Continuing education courses supply practitioners with the tools they need to provide their customers with the highest quality and most up-to-date services possible, which is obviously advantageous to consumers. In addition, continuing education courses allow practitioners to make themselves more competitive in the marketplace, which benefits them individually as well. Just last session, we passed Act 318 to require continuing education for dental hygienists. *Ma* However, somewhat surprisingly, Wisconsin is one of only three states that does not require its dentists to complete continuing education courses as a condition of license renewal. In recognition of the myriad benefits of continuing education, the Wisconsin Dental Association worked with us to draft the legislation that is before you today.

Procedurally speaking, this bill is very straightforward. Its only substantive requirement is that all dentists practicing within the State complete 30 hours of continuing education related to the practice of dentistry every two years, including no less than 25 credit hours of instruction in clinical dentistry. Completion of thirty credit hours will be a prerequisite to license renewal. The dental examining board will have the discretion to waive this requirement if it finds that extraordinary circumstances, such as prolonged illness, have prevented a person licensed to practice dentistry from meeting the requirement. We believe that these relatively straightforward requirements will improve both the treatment that dental patients receive as well as satisfaction with the practice of dentistry on the whole. Passage of this bill is simply a reflection of sound public policy: dentists support it, patients support it, and it improves the quality of health care for all. Further, this bill received overwhelming bi-partisan support in the Assembly, where it was passed unanimously by both its assigned committee as well as by the full legislative body.

Again, on behalf of both myself and Representative Molepske, thank you all for your time and consideration of this important legislation. I would appreciate it if you would direct all questions or comments to Representative Molepske at a later time. Thank you.

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WDA Testimony in Support of AB 153 Mandatory Continuing Education for Dentists

**Dr. Stan Brysh, WDA Region 5 Trustee
Senate Health Committee Public Hearing
Wednesday, September 5, 2007 - 10:00 AM – 411 South**

Good morning, Chair Erpenbach and members of the Senate Health Committee. My name is Dr. Stan Brysh. I am a general dentist who practices right here in Madison and I serve on the Board of Trustees of the Wisconsin Dental Association (WDA).

After four years of undergraduate study at the University of Dayton, I attended four years of dental school at the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine. I graduated with my doctorate in dentistry in 1975, after which I did a one-year residency in general dentistry at Highland View Hospital in Cleveland, Ohio followed by twenty-three years of full time private practice. I retired from private practice in 1999 and currently am the director of the General Practice Residency in Dentistry at Meriter Hospital here in Madison. I am a fellow of the American Association of Hospital Dentists, am board certified by the American Board of Special Care Dentistry and also serve as the chair of the Department of Dentistry at Meriter. I review my education and training because, with the exception of the one-year residency, fellowship and board certification, my path is similar to the path which most of my colleagues have followed. You can see that in order to practice dentistry, a person has to be willing to embrace multiple years of higher education. As a full time dental educator and clinician I know first hand the importance on continuing education in my profession. Reviewing the educational requirements needed to earn a dental degree puts into perspective how minimal this CE requirement really is.

I'm here today to testify in support of AB 153 which would require all licensed dentists to take 30 hours of continuing education (CE) during each two-year licensure period. The bill would further clarify that 25 of the 30 CE hours must be of a clinical nature and that no more than 4 hours spent teaching a course can be counted towards the total 30 hour requirement. Wisconsin is currently only one of three states without mandatory CE requirements for dentists. Wyoming and Colorado are the other two states.

Here in our state, we are one of only two health care professions (nursing being the other) that is not currently required to take mandatory CE. The dentists in this state are committed to promoting professional excellence and quality oral health care for the citizens of the State of Wisconsin. In an effort to demonstrate that commitment, the WDA has strongly encouraged dentists to take continuing education to stay abreast of advancements in the art and science of dentistry. We believe the vast majority of dentists already meet these CE requirements each year. It is time for organized dentistry to go on record in favor of continuing education in a way that publicly declares the profession's commitment to lifelong learning.

Regarding the fiscal estimate, it is our understanding that the bill draft would allow an audit to be authorized by the Dentistry Examining Board (DEB). The passage of this bill

MISSION STATEMENT

The Wisconsin Dental Association advances the interests of its members and the dental profession by promoting professional excellence and quality oral health care for the public.

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would not automatically require an audit be conducted but simply provide an estimate of what it would cost, should the DEB decide to require a routine audit.

The WDA thanks Representatives Strachota and Molepske and Senators Erpenbach and Darling for their leadership and efforts on this bill. We continue to encourage bipartisan support for this bill as it moves through the legislative process and we ask for your support as this bill comes up for a vote before this committee. Thank you for your time and attention. I would be happy to take any questions you might have.

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